

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala protect and preserve him),
Vice President Darul Uloom Karachi

Memories

(Episode 9)

Elementary Education

Babul Islam was the name of the Masjid near our house. Our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) used to pray in that Masjid. A small Madrasa by the name of Imdadul Uloom was running in that Masjid but it was in the form of a Maktab (Elementary school). Our respected father gathered some scholars for teaching Arabic and Persian, among whom Hazrat Maulana Fazal Muhammad Sahab Swati (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) was the most senior teacher (This is the same pious personality who had initially taught at Darul Uloom, then in Binnori Town and thereafter in a Madrasa in Swat which he had established himself, and about whom I have written in some detail in *Nuqoosh-e-Raftagan*). Besides him, Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab and Hazrat Maulana Ameeruz Zaman Kashmiri Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon them both) are especially worthy of mention. In addition, our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) had a room built on the roof above the main door of the Masjid and established a Darul Iftaa therein. This was done because after shifting to Pakistan our respected father kept receiving *Fiqhi* (jurisprudential) questions but there was no process for copying them or keeping a record of the Fatwas. Our respected father would personally receive and send the post. With the setting up of this Darul Iftaa a proper process for writing the Fatwas, copying and recording them, and contacting the individuals who had requested for the Fatwa was established. And an elderly individual, whose name I'm unable to recall try as I may, was assigned the task of copying the Fatwas.

At that time our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) was also a member of the "Islamic Education Board", which was a department located adjacent to the Constitutional Assembly. I had studied "*Hamd-e-Baari*" in Jacob Line. Our respected father made me start the Persian book "*Gulzar o Bustan*" and, after teaching me a portion from the book, would take me along to the Assembly. I would revise my lesson there after which my respected father would test me. My respected father always treated me with love and kindness, but only one day did he slap me. At one place in "*Gulzar o Bustan*" the Persian word for monkey "*Bozeenah*" occurs. I kept reading it as "*Boznah*". My respected father corrected me several times that it's "*Bozeenah*" and not "*Boznah*" but for some reason the word "*Boznah*" kept slipping off my tongue. Due to this, he slapped me one day and I came to my senses. Thereafter I never made the same mistake again. He had also hit me one other time after that, and that was when I would not wake up for Fajr prayer. May Allah Ta'ala continuously raise his status. He never hit me besides those two times.

When regular classes started in Masjid Babul Islam he put me under the tutelage of Hazrat Maulana Fazal Muhammad Sahab Swati (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). Hazrat Maulana Fazal Muhammad Sahab was an erudite elder, and his personality was very awe-inspiring. Owing to my irregular studies I was still stuck at "*Gulzar of Bustan*" but some students from higher grades also attended his lessons, among whom Maulana Ashraf Ali Sahab Lahori (May his shade be extended) and Maulana Muhammad Ismail Balkhi are especially worthy of mention. Hazrat Maulana Fazal Muhammad Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) started teaching them from "*Gulistan*", "*Bostan*" and "*Ahsanul Qawaid*", etc. and would sometimes give me lessons as well. At the same time, to train me in good handwriting, he put me under the elderly personality who was responsible for copying Fatwas in Darul Iftaa. In the evening Hazrat Maulana Fazal Muhammad Sahab (May his secret be sanctified) would review my day's lessons to make sure I had actually studied. I would anyway be frightened by his awe-inspiring personality, and on top of that the apprehension about having to give him accountability in the evening would dwell on my mind throughout the day.

I remember a funny incident from those days. I was studying elementary Persian at that time, and that too irregularly, but that elderly person of Darul Iftaa, who was training me in good handwriting, would sometimes teach some students Arabic. I would notice in Arabic texts that they frequently contained the word "إِنَّ". One day I asked my handwriting teacher as to what "إِنَّ" means. He replied "*Tahqeeq*" ("Verily"). This word went over my head, at which I concluded that Arabic is such a difficult language that it remains incomprehensible even if you translate it.

My elder brother Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafee' Usmani Sahab (May his shade be extended) was completing his memorization of the Quran in the same Madrasa under respected Qari Fakhruddin Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). When he finished his memorization he was also supposed to learn Persian. After a few days Hazrat Maulana Ameeruz Zaman Kashmiri Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) also arrived, and he was also appointed as a teacher in the Madrasa, whereafter both of us, along with some other students, began receiving regular lessons in "*Rahbar-e-Farsi*", "*Tayseerul Muftadi*", etc. Since this Madrasa did not have the facilities of a proper school, and it was not appropriate to teach in the Masjid on remuneration from Shariah point of view, Hazrat Maulana (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) used to teach us in the Wudu area. This was the first time I was studying as a regular student. May Allah Ta'ala bestow high ranks of Paradise on Hazrat Maulana Ameeruz Zaman Kashmiri Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him); he taught us with extreme love and kindness. He was a Mujahid, and personally participated in the Jihad of Kashmir of 1948, and then again in the "police action" of Hyderabad Deccan, the stories of which he would enthusiastically narrate. The passion for Jihad permeated his being, and due to his company we also developed this passion. And this *dua* (prayer) became part of my everyday routine: "O Allah! Grant me a life of a Mujahid and the death of a martyr."

Founding of Darul Uloom Karachi

After coming to Karachi, the concern weighed upon my respected father's (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) mind day and night that renowned centres of Islamic learning were left behind in India, and the areas which came to Pakistan's share contained Islamic schools which were both few in number and

of a lower quality of education. Especially in Karachi, there was no noteworthy Madrasa. A solitary Madrasa in Khadda, an inner locale of Karachi, by the name of Mazharul Uloom provided education up to *Dawra-e-Hadith*¹, but it was inadequate in catering to the needs of the city. As a result, our respected father was anxious for a quality Madrasa to be established here. It so happened by the will of Allah Ta'ala that a school belonging to Sikhs was located in Nanak Warah which was left abandoned after the Sikhs had left. Our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) acquired it from the government for educational purposes. Our respected father, together with Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon them both), cleaned the place and commenced formal classes in the name of Allah Ta'ala; Darul Uloom was thus founded. And on 11 Shawwal 1371H, equivalent to 3 July 1952, the Darul Uloom began functioning as a formal organization. In that first year, classes were only held until *Mishkat Sharif*; there was no class of *Dawra-e-Hadith*, and the lessons of *Mishkat* were taught by our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) himself.

My respected brother Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhamamd Rafee' Usmani Sahab (May his shade be extended) completed his memorization of Quran in the blessed month of Ramadan 1371H, and with the favour of Allah Ta'ala completed the recitation of Quran in Taraweeh prayers for the first time in Ramadan 1371H (equivalent to June 1952) in Masjid Babul Islam itself, in the Darul Iftaa which was established by our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him); the Darul Uloom was founded after Eid.

Allah Ta'ala bestowed this honour upon Darul Uloom Karachi that after the creation of Pakistan it was the first quality Islamic seminary in the entire Sindh province, rather there were only a handful of Islamic seminaries even in the entire Pakistan. As a result, it served as a launch pad for the religious services of many scholars who went on to become great luminaries for the country. For example, Hazrat Maulana Mufti Wali Hasan Sahab (who, after our respected father and Hazrat Maulana Mufti Mahmood Sahab, was given the title of Grand Mufti by the honourable scholars), in absence of any religious organization, was teaching Islamic studies at a secondary school (Metropolis School) at Burns Road. He had been a classmate of Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (the first coordinator of Darul Uloom Karachi) in Deoband. Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) brought him from the school to Darul Uloom, and he began his teaching career from here. Similarly, Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab (who went on to become Shaykhul Hadith and coordinator of Darul Uloom Karachi) used to teach Urdu literature at "*Danish Kada*", an institute of Oriental Studies which was located a short distance from our house at Burns Road. My nephew and friend, Maulana Hakeem Musharraf Husain Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), was preparing for "*Adeeb Urdu*" examination in those days. He used to study in "*Danish Kada*". One day I accompanied him to "*Danish Kada*" when Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) was teaching "*Shikwa Jaba-e-Shikwa*" of the Poet of the East the late Dr Iqbal. I heard him recite the following couplet which is still echoing in my ears:

نالے بُلبل کے سُنوں' اور ہم تن گوش رہوں

¹ *Dawra-e-Hadith* is the last year of the *Dars-e-Nizami* curriculum of Islamic studies

ہم نوا! میں بھی کوئی گل ہوں کہ خاموش رہوں

Should I just listen to the singing of the nightingale, and remain unmoved?

Friend! Am I just a flower that I should remain quiet?

After the creation of Darul Uloom, Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) brought him to Darul Uloom, and he started his teaching career from here. Even though the teaching careers of Hazrat Maulana Fazal Muhammad Sahab Swati and Hazrat Maulana Ameeruz Zaman Sahab Kashmiri (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon them both) had already begun in Masjid Babul Islam, as I have mentioned previously it was not an official Madrasa, so their teaching services formally began from Darul Uloom. Hazrat Maulana Mazhar Baqa Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), who later became a Mufti and was finally appointed as a teacher of *Usoolul Fiqh* (Principles of Jurisprudence) at Umm al-Qura University in Makkah Mukarramah, according to his own words he was a liberal-minded person and was completely dissociated from Madrasa life. However after meeting our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) his life transformed completely, the stories of which he would delightfully narrate, and has also narrated them in his autobiography. When our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) noticed a valuable gem in him, he assigned teaching services in Darul Uloom to him. Initially he was given the responsibility of just copying the Fatwas but later, after undergoing the training of issuing Fatwas, he was appointed as Vice Mufti. Hazrat Maulana Qari Ri'ayatullah Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) also started his teaching life in Pakistan from here. Our respected father (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) also invited Hazrat Maulana Ubaydul Haq Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), who later became a leader of the scholars in Bangladesh, and received teaching services from him. And it was from here itself that his knowledge and scholarship became famous. Hazrat Maulana Muntakhabul Haq (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) also served as a teacher here, and later became the Principal of Faculty of Islamic Studies of Karachi University. Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Mateen Khateeb Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) also moved from Lahore and came to Darul Uloom, and began teaching *Tafsir Jalalayn*, and later the duties of Vice Coordinator were assigned to him. Due to this Hazrat Maulana Mufti Wali Hasan Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) used to call Darul Uloom Karachi the mother of scholars.

Soon, so many students began applying to Darul Uloom for their studies that it became impossible to separate classrooms and students' hostels. Consequently, lessons took place during the day such that students' beddings would be lying rolled up near all four walls, and the same room would be thronged with beddings at night such that there would not be enough space even to walk through between two beddings.

When I started studying in Darul Uloom I had to study Persian first, and I was nine years old at the time. Since respected brother Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muihammad Rafee' Usmani Sahab (May his shade be extended) had memorized the Quran, and I missed out on this, we thus became classmates from Persian class onwards. Hazrat Maulana Badeeuz Zaman Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) had recently joined Darul Uloom after leaving the famous Madrasa at Anni, and all our books were assigned to him. *Risalah Nadir, Pand Nama, Insha-e-Farigh, Gulistan, Bostan, Ahsanul Qawaid*, we studied all

these books from Hazrat Maulana. The following is written in *Bhai Sahab's* (May his shade be extended) diary dated 10 Muharram 1372AH, equivalent to 1st October 1952: "Today we started *Gulistan* under Hazrat Maulana Badeeuz Zaman Sahab in Madrasa 'Arabiya Darul Uloom". At the same time he would also train us in Persian composition. May Allah Ta'ala perpetually raise his status; he taught us with great love and kindness, and made us versed enough in Persian language that, all praise is for Allah, the ability to read and understand Persian poetry and literature was developed in us. The record of my examination results that year is published in the chronicles of Darul Uloom. Since I had attained the good fortune of having performed Hajj with my parents at the age of eight, several of my teachers would call me "*Haji Jee*". (And Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), due to my naughtiness, would call me "*Pa Jee*" (rascal) on the same rhyme, and I would be delighted at this frankness). Consequently, my name is published as "Haji Muhammad Taqi" in the chronicles as well. In those days, in line with the age-old marking system of Darul Uloom Deoband, 50 marks were allotted per book. Any student who attained 48 or more marks was considered to have passed 1st Class, 45 to 47 was 2nd Class, 40 to 44 was Lower Class, and thereafter 35 to 39 was considered Pass. Whoever attained more than 35 marks was considered to have passed and usually would be allowed to proceed to the next grade. Marks below 35 were considered Fail. It was also a tradition that even though the total marks per book were 50, any student who did outstandingly well in the exam would sometimes be given more than 50 marks. Thus, good students sometimes got 51 or 52 marks. According to this marking system, my exam results were as follows:

Subject	Marks
<i>Gulistan</i>	51
<i>Bostan</i>	45
<i>Ahsanul Qawaid</i>	50
<i>Insha-e-Farigh</i>	51
Mathematics	50
Handwriting	40
<i>Tarjamatayn</i>	48
<i>Ma La Budda Minh</i>	49
<i>Jamalul Quran</i>	51
<i>Qira'ah</i>	49

Beginning of Arabic Education

The next year, i.e. Shawwal 1372AH, equivalent to July 1953, we started our learning of Arabic subjects. I had reached ten years of age, and all our books except "*Arbi Ka Muallim*" ("Arabic Tutor") were assigned to Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). Consequently, we successively studied *Meezan o Munsha'ib*, *Panj Ganj* and '*Ilmus Seegha* for *Sarf* (morphology); for *Nahw* (grammar) we studied *Nahw Meer*, *Sharh Maiya 'Aamil* and *Hidayatun Nahw*; for literature we studied *Duroosul Adab* of Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Sulayman Nadwi Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) and thereafter *Mufeedut Talibeen*; we studied all these books from Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). We studied "*Arbi Ka Muallim*" (Arabic Tutor) from Hazrat Mufti Wali Hasan Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). Hazrat Mufti Sahab had a penchant for

literature, due to which he enthusiastically made us practice Arabic composition. Due to my young age, I could not master the subtleties of Arabic grammar and morphology, but I liked to write in Arabic from the beginning. As a result, I would often successfully pass writing exercises, though my handwriting used to be very bad, and it took a long time for it to improve. My teachers, in consideration of my young age, would greatly appreciate my small efforts and would deal with me with love and encouragement. I would find practicing speaking in Arabic difficult because my tongue was not fluent, and I would often falter while speaking. Thus, my elder brother Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafee' Sahab, who conversed eloquently from the start *MashaAllah*, would often help me practice.

Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him) would conduct a test every Thursday, due to which we had to stay focussed during the entire week. And it was due to his excellent teaching skills that in that single year we studied the same number of books as are taught in two years today. Thus we studied *Sharh Maiya 'Aamil* and *Hidayatun Nahw* together with *Nahw Meer*; *Panj Ganj* and *'Ilmus Seegha* together with *Meezan*; and *Nurul Idah* of Fiqh together with *Duroosul Adab* and *Mufeedut Talibeen*, all in the same year.

A long cane used to remain with Hazrat, which merely served the purpose of inspiring awe in students, and which was seldom used. Albeit it would be used once in a while, and I also attained the good fortune of being on the receiving end of that cane once or twice.

There was nobody my age in my class; all were older than me. As a result, I could not bond with them during play time after classes. Thus, I would make extracurricular friendships with students in classes below mine. Besides my elder brother, among my classmates was the elder brother of Maulana Habibullah Mukhtar Sahab Shaheed (the former rector of Jamiya Arabiya Binnori Town), Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Sahab (who is currently residing in Makkah Mukarramah), while Maulana Habibullah Mukhtar Sahab was one year junior to us. My nephew Hakeem Musharraf Hussain Sahab as well as Qari Muhammad Ismail Meerathi Sahab were both his classmates. After lessons, I would play with them for a while in a nearby park, or sometimes outside the premises of Darul Uloom. Both of them had a knack for all games, from *Kabaddi* and *Gilli Danda* (Tip-cat) to cricket. I would anyway stick with them as a sidekick, but could never attain mastery in any game. Besides, we used to be in a hurry to return home after Asar so we had anyway very limited time to play. At a corner of the park in front of the Madrasa, a street vendor would roast grams, puffed rice, popcorn, etc., the earthy smell of which would intensify our hunger in the afternoon. My respected mother would give me one Anna daily as pocket money, which used to be ample to fulfil the cravings of a child in those days. I would spend half of my capital in buying the earthy-smelling popcorn or roasted grams from the street vendor and, after having the lunch which would come from home, would spend the remaining on buying raw guavas, raw mangos or sour Almond fruit. And I would also play for a while during this time in the afternoon.

I still remember that there was a Memon boy named Yusuf who used to live near our house at Burns road. I was flabbergasted when he told me that he received four Annas as daily pocket money, considering it to be an outrageous amount to have for living a lavish lifestyle!

Yes, that's right! Today I also laugh at this, and you would surely be at least smiling, because what was the worth of four Annas as something to be envied for? However a day will come when the wealth and properties which we consider enviable today, and over which we dispute and wage legal battles, we would consider them more worthless than four Annas, and we would laugh as to what trifling things did we cherish? That day we will realize the truthfulness of what the Noble Quran has foretold us:

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ

Translation: The worldly life is nothing but a material of delusion.

Anyway! My first year of Arabic studies thus ended, and year-end exams approached. The following were my results that year:

Subject	Marks
<i>Nurul Idah</i>	49
<i>Meezan o Munsha'ib</i>	51
<i>Arabic Ka Mu'allim</i> (Arabic Tutor)	49
<i>Nahw Meer</i>	51
<i>Duroosul Adab</i>	49
<i>Sharh Maiya 'Aamil</i>	48
<i>Hidayatun Nahw</i>	45
<i>Mufeedut Talibeen</i>	50
<i>Panj Ganj</i>	48
<i>'Ilums Seegha</i>	50
<i>Jamalul Quran</i>	47
Tajweed	51
Mathematics	48
Handwriting	41

The next year (i.e. 1373 AH, equivalent to 1954) again all our books were assigned to Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him). Consequently, we studied *Kaafiya*, *Nafhatul 'Arab*, *Tayseerul Mantiq*, *Mirqat* and *Sharh Tahzeeb* all from him. We became so accustomed to Hazrat's captivating style of teaching that we could not cope with any other style of teaching. After having studied *Nurul Idah* from Hazrat the previous year, when it was time to study *Qudoori* from him this year, due to some need of the Madrasa this book was assigned to a new teacher instead of him. However our class, which included, besides us two brothers, Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Sahab (who was the elder brother of Hazrat Maulana Habibullah Mukhtar Sahab Shaheed, the former rector of Jamiyatul Uloom Al-Islamiyyah Binnori Town), Maulana Abdur Razzaq Sahab Muradabadi Muhajir Madani and several other intelligent students, could not get along with him. There was no culture of sending complaints against teachers, but the management itself noted something amiss and assigned this book to Hazrat Maulana Ameeruz Zaman Sahab Kashmiri (May Allah Ta'ala's mercy be upon him), with whom we were accustomed since long, and so all students were comfortable with him.

(Continued)